Price 2d.

THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION

MAGAZINE.

No. CLXXX. DECEMBER, 1863. VOL. XV.

RAGGED SCHOOL
PRECEPT.
Deliver the poor and needy; rid them out hand of the wicked.
PROMISE
And thou shalt be blessed for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Luke XIV. 4

"The word o f the Lord endureth for ever."—1 Peter i. 25.

PROFITS DEVOTED TO RAGGED SCHOOLS.

LONDON:
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* * All Communications to be addressed to the Editor, 1, Exeter Hall, London.
* Orders for Advertisements to be sent to Robert K. Burt, Printer, Holborn Hill.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—The Committee beg to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of a box of clothing from George Higgs; a box of clothing from Mrs. Ditmas; a parcel of print from Mrs. V. Kemble; two bundles of clothing from anonymous friends; a parcel of clothing and a parcel of books from Mrs. Reade; a parcel of clothing for Lamb and Flag Schools, per Miss Bodkin; a bale of shirts and petticoats from Miss Ray; and a pair of trousers and coat from a friend at Clapham.

Donations of books for forming school libraries, and left-off clothing for distribution to the children of Ragged Schools, will be thankfully received by Mr. JOSEPH G. GENT, 1, Exeter Hall, Strand, W.C.

RAGGED SCHOOL TEACHERS ASSOCIATION.

THE EASTERN DIVISION will hold their MONTHLY MEETING on Saturday, December 12th, at Three o'clock, at the Ragged School, No. 2, Little Peter Street, Sun Street, Bishopsgate. The subject of the Lecture will be, "THE OPEN BIBLE."

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The December Parts of "THE LEISURE HOUR" and "THE SUNDAY AT HOME" will be ready on the 15th of December; and the Parts for January, 1864, will be published on the 1st day of the New Year.

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Contributions will be thankfully received by the Treasurer, A. Sperling, Esq.; the Hon. Secretary, J. A. Merrington, Esq.; or the Secretary, Mr. Wm. A. Blake, at the Office, 4, Trafalgar Square; Messrs. Nisbet, Berners Street; Messrs. Hatchard, 187, Piccadilly; and Messrs. Seeley, Fleet Street.

Copies of the last Annual Report will be forwarded, post free, on a line being addressed to the Secretary.

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WENTWORTH STREET RAGGED SCHOOLS,

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THE COMMITTEE are again reluctantly obliged to make this public appeal in aid of funds. The debt of about £120 still stands, the results of special efforts put forth having been little more than adequate to meet annual expenses.

The Committee feel thankful for the encouragement given to their labours by sundry spontaneous additions to their list of donors and subscribers. Of these latter many more are solicited, that the REGULAR INCOME may be equal to the necessary expenditure, so that the results of lectures, &c., now being delivered, may be appropriated to the extinction of the debt.

Donations and Subscriptions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Aaron Ayshford, Esq., Treasurer, 98, Richmond Road, Dalston, and 9, Friday Street, Cheapside; and of Mr. Joseph Wilkinson, 1, Oxford Terrace, Middleton Road, Dalston, and 186, Shoreditch; and Mr. George Panton, 8, Albion Square East, Dalston, Hon. Secretaries, who will also be pleased to forward Reports, on application.

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THESE Schools are situated in one of the lowest districts of the City of London, containing a population of about 10,000. They have been in operation nearly *Seventeen* Years, and in the Day, Evening, and Sunday Schools from 500 to 600 poor Children receive Free Education. The Committee have lately been obliged to lease New Premises, the adapting and fittings of which have cost about £300. Towards this sum the Committee of the Ragged School Union have promised £60; Samuel Morley, Esq., £50; W. H. Goschen, Esq., M.P., £10 10s.; and other friends about £35; leaving nearly £150 yet to be raised.

Contributions are very earnestly solicited and will be thankfully received by Mr. GENT, 1, Exeter Hall, or by the Treasurer of the School, Mr. FRANCIS CUTHBERTSON, 34, Arundel Square, N.

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J. E. E. tenders his sincere thanks to those ladies and gentlemen who have hitherto favoured him with their kind patronage, and hopes by strict attention to ensure a continuance of the same; he also begs most respectfully to solicit the favour of their recommendation.

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References are kindly permitted to be made to the Secretaries of the Ragged School Union and the Temperance League.

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THE BEST BECAUSE it is GOOD as well as CHEAP, hence the great demand for HORNIMAN'S TEA.
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On the 31st of December the Committee will close their seventh year's labour, during which time they have admitted more than *eleven hundred* poor young women into the Homes. About *eight hundred* of these have been provided with situations, restored to their friends, or otherwise assisted. The majority of the above were from the country, and orphans. Many of these were saved from sin by the timely aid offered by this Institution, and others were rescued from its fatal effects by God's blessing on its reformatory efforts. The Committee now ask for Contributions to enable them to close the year without the burden of debt.

Subscriptions and donations in aid of this Institution will be thankfully received by

Messrs. BOSANQUET & Co., Bankers, 73, Lombard Street, E.C.
Mr. F. NICHOLLS, 14, Old Jewry Chambers, E.C.
Mr. E. W. THOMAS, Secretary, 200, Euston Road, Euston Square, N.W.

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Papers, Original and Selected.

THE WORK, AND HOW DONE, IN PROVINCIAL TOWNS.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

JUST ten years have elapsed between our first and second visit to the Ragged Schools in Tunbridge Wells. In November, 1853, the effort was an infant of but a few months' existence. Its proportions seemed in harmony with its age, and its promises of vigour were encouraging. That that infant would ever develop into a giant of its kind was improbable; for there did not seem to be food enough in Tunbridge Wells to foster such development, nor space enough there for needful exercise, notwithstanding its open commons, high, broad roads, and delightful walks; and without full exercise there could not be fast development. This is no matter for regret, but rather for congratulation. It must not, however, be presumed that our infant is a pigmy, weak and delicate, and therefore incapable of discharging the onerous duty naturally and rightly devolving upon it. No, it is small, but strong; it is humble, but effective; it is unostentatious, and yet patronized.

We renewed our acquaintance with our young friend at the end of October, 1863. Ten years had made a great difference. It was no longer an infant, nursed in a wretched hovel inhabited by a squalid family in a back slum to be found in the rear of the houses on the east and north sides of Grosvenor and Calverley Roads, with rows of fish hung up to the ceiling to be dried for future food. The herrings thus gracing the ceiling would have furnished fine sport for the attendants of a London Ragged School, but in Tunbridge Wells they were allowed to pass as objects too common to excite much attention. The fish thus strung in many rows may be approved, indicating as it did provident habits; but, for health and comfort sake, their absence was more to be desired than their presence. Some people can sleep soundly in midst of the hum, rattle, and noise of machinery; and these seem to thrive in the midst of darkness, dirt, and stench. We found our friend living precisely in the same back slum, but very much better housed, and

with a few nick-nacks that indicate comfort, and which are conducive to health. Ten years' efforts and struggles have given our friend a history to fall back upon, and which certainly is not devoid of interest.

The Christian philanthropists of Tunbridge Wells were, of their own knowledge, aware that a small Ragged School was needed in that town; and it afterwards became clear that the need for one existed in larger proportion than they thought it did; for in their first report the Committee say, that "although" they were "fully persuaded of the need of this work, little thought, when they commenced it, that more than forty destitute boys were fit objects for a Ragged School; but such, through this means, has been ascertained to be the case." To have found so large a body as "forty fit objects" was quite a revelation to the best friends of the cause. On the occasion of our recent visit it was apparent, from the operations carried on in and in connection with the school, that the convictions of the Committee and workers were now more in proportion to the real wants, limited as they may be, of the locality, than they were when they began their benevolent labours. The chief agent employed is Mr. T. Jay, one of the country towns' missionaries, kindly superintended by John Finch, Esq., of Mount Ephraim, who, on entering this mission-field, about eleven years since, soon discovered a class of persons, in Gas Lane and its avenues, who, from their social and moral status, could be best operated upon by means of a Ragged School. Their occupations embraced donkey-drivers, brick-makers, chimney-sweeps, rag and bone gatherers, and many others of a nondescript character. The missionary soon found many of the boys of this locality could neither read nor write, and without the means of instruction. This state of things becoming more and more revealed to the visitor, he tried to make it known to others, with a view to enlist their sympathies, and whose personal help he needed. Some, however, told him plainly they did not believe his statement, and that they were sure a Ragged School was not needed in Tunbridge Wells. Single-handed he had for a time to pursue the even tenour of his course, at least as *even* as he could, for he oft found it rough enough.

The first night he began he had twelve boys. He asked them a few questions, such as the name of the first man. Nine out of ten to whom the question was put could not answer it. Their conduct was distressing: chewing tobacco, and spitting in each other's caps; birds and mice let loose in the room, when a general commotion

followed. When told to kneel during prayers, some would throw themselves on the floor bawling "Amen" before a word of prayer was offered. Week by week they met, the numbers gradually increasing, till more came than could be accommodated, and the door had to be locked against many outsiders. Appeals for help were again made, now based on necessities that rested, not only on convictions, but, on stern facts. The response now was, not that there was no occasion for a Ragged School in Tunbridge Wells, but, "What is the use of trying to tame such heathens? If I were you I would give it up." The ancient tale of "a certain priest," and "likewise a Levite," was here reduced to modern life. They both "saw," "looked," and "passed by," without rendering any help. The first twelve months were thus spent, and then came a gleam of encouragement from—as is often the case in such efforts—from a lady. She had heard of what was being attempted, and of the difficulties under which it was being done, and seeing that many of those hindrances could be removed if a better room could be obtained, nobly and at once made the offer of £50 towards the cost of putting up a suitable room on the right spot for this effort. This offer was as unexpected as it was generous and encouraging, and, as it proved, influential; as the friends—whether they had been "priests" or "Levites" is not known—now came forward, and not only "saw" and "looked," but gave real help. Those who formed the small Committee of Management were encouraged by this recognition and support, and they at once took action, and the result was, that within three months of the offer being made, a freehold piece of land in Gas Lane was purchased and conveyed to trustees, the architect was employed and his plans completed, the builder furnished his estimates and finished the building, and the room was open for the benefit of the poor. The entire cost, including land, was less than £230. This sum was soon raised, and now for ten years the Gospel of the Lord Jesus has been taught to old and young, to male and female, to the hopeful and the hopeless. A fresh start was thus given to this new effort, and just as opportunity offered, necessities made known, and experience gained, have effort after effort been added to the original Ragged School, as commenced by the town missionary, till at the present time the following are in full operation:—

1. Town Mission.
2. Rescue of Fallen Girls.
3. Evening Schools for Boys and Girls.

4. Industrial School for Boys and Girls.
5. Emigration of special cases to the Colonies.
6. Sending Lads into Navy and Army.
7. Procuring Situations for any that can be recommended.
8. Placing Convicted Lads in Reformatories.
9. Mothers' Meetings.
10. The Gospel sent into the Hop Gardens of Kent during the harvest.

The annual cost of these movements has of course been increasing, but on no occasion has a debt been incurred without the Committee being in a position to pay the claim as soon as made. The following figures will show the progress of the funds to the present time :—

	£	s.	d.
1853	87	15	6
1854	86	19	0
„ For Building and Ground	229	0	8½
1855	130	2	7
1856	133	19	4½
1857	139	9	8
1858	151	18	1
1859	146	7	10½
1860	149	14	11½
1861	144	9	5
1862	134	2	4
1863	124	15	2½

The total sum thus collected is £1,658 14s. 8d., or, on average, £150 per year. A balance was left on hand to commence the duties of another year. It is right to add that the expenses attending the rescue of fallen girls are not included in the above, and the particulars of which were not obtained. In carrying out this department the Committee avail themselves of the London institutions. They have no home of their own for the purpose. They wisely prefer sending such cases to a distance, that they may be entirely removed from old associations and the neighbourhoods where a course of vice has been pursued. Opportunities are afforded by London institutions to carry out such a plan. The friends sending such cases are under an agreement to bear a portion of the expense ; say, £3 on admission, and £2 more at the end of the first five months ; after which, whatever expense is incurred has to be met by the institution receiving the case. Upon a similar footing a boy is placed in one or other of the London refuges or reformatories. Before sending such cases, and with a view to test them so as to avoid imposition and trickery, the

missionary, having a spare room in his residence, places in it the penitent for such period as may be needful for him and his good wife to form a tolerably sound opinion of the real object of the person. If that opinion be favourable, the case is seriously entertained, and efforts made for admission to a home of a somewhat more permanent kind, and as far away as may be practicable. Respecting this peculiar effort the Committee say,—

"In all cases care has been taken to test the sincerity of their repentance; and there is reason to hope that, with the blessing of God, many will be delivered from the pit of death. Through the instrumentality of such special Committee, 64 have been placed in various refuges and reformatories, most of whom have passed through the institutions and gone into service; several have been married; 8 have left of their own accord, and they have no reason to believe that more than 5 or 6 of them have relapsed."

The Committee and Mr. Jay possess many most interesting details of the successful working of the various departments, and of the happy results following the efforts made, with a few of which we bring our remarks to a close:—

"C——, sixteen years of age, could read a little when he entered the school; has made great progress in reading and writing. His father is a Protestant, mother an Irish Roman Catholic. For years he has wandered about seeking a living by collecting rags and bones, in a most filthy condition. There was something in his manner that appeared promising, which led the missionary to endeavour to rescue him from the paths of destruction, to which he was fast hastening. He made known the case to a gentleman, one of the Committee, who kindly exerted himself to get the poor lad into the Marine Society, Bishopsgate Street, London, as he had a great desire for the sea. After some trouble and expense in journeys to London, he was accepted. His mother was so thoroughly ignorant that he had great difficulty in getting her to see the advantages the society held out. She became at last sufficiently alive to the advantages offered as to be glad to let him go. He often had him at his own house, for the purpose of giving him good advice, which he appeared to receive. He was much attached to his school, and took it as a great punishment if at any time he was expelled for a time for misconduct. On one wet Sunday evening he had to turn him out. At the close of the school he came to the door with an umbrella for him, saying, 'I knew, sir, you had a cold, so I went to your house and got it, as I thought you would get wet going home.' As he was conducting him and his mother to the train, the poor boy said, 'I shall think of you when I am far away. Had there been no Ragged School I should never have got into this.' On August 3rd he was stripped of his rags, and properly clothed, and safely deposited at Woolwich, where, according to the rules of the Society, he will be trained for three months; but a letter has been received stating that he was to set sail for the East Indies on Sept. 5th. He has since been apprenticed to the East India Service for five years, and sailed for Bombay, and thus he has been arrested from a course of evil, and there is every hope of his becoming a useful member of society."

This lad has since called upon the friends of the school, to thank them for their help, and their rescue of him from a life of degrada-

tion. He was well dressed, and had the appearance of having been more than once promoted for good conduct.

"*Juvenile Depravity.*—K——, a boy of eleven years of age, who has attended the Ragged School about four months, committed seven robberies by means of a false key; was committed to Maidstone Jail for seven days, and also once received a flogging; was encouraged to thieve by others. The missionary having received an admission for him to the 'Home in the East,' Old Ford, near Bow, London, an institution for juvenile criminals under sixteen years of age, he has been placed there with every prospect of success. This lad has since been visited by his father, who was much pleased in finding his son greatly improved and learning brush-making."

This lad has since returned to the town, and has there become a respectable master tradesman. The brush-making served to inculcate and train to industry, but he follows quite another trade.

"W——, nineteen years of age, an orphan, after being in the school for some months, enlisted into the militia, and then volunteered to go to the Baltic, where he got wounded, disabled for active service for life, returned with only sixpence per day for one twelvemonth. At first he was set up with a basket of fruit; but this would not answer, but led to something more substantial and permanent. A Christian lady, who took an interest in his case, asked me one day if I could propose anything that would prove beneficial to his future welfare, when shoe-making was thought most desirable. Accordingly he was placed under an instructor, being at the same time entirely supported, chiefly at the expense of this lady, and in about four months acquired sufficient knowledge of the trade so as to enable him to get his own living. Tools, &c., were provided for him, and he has now set up for himself, and it is hoped that this will prove the means of preserving him from the state of poverty into which he had fallen."

This wounded and pensioned soldier quite recovered, and again enlisted, and is now serving in the Indian army.

"——. This boy was one of the first scholars in the Ragged School. He acquired some knowledge of the tailoring, and was apprenticed to Mr. ——, a respectable tradesman. He has conducted himself well, and is rising up into respectable life. His master told me that he has been with him nearly three years, and gives him a good character. A short time back he (the lad) stopped me in the street, saying, 'I have been thinking of offering myself to help you in the Ragged School: I got good myself, and now wish to try and do good to others.' I have made him a kind of monitor, and it is pleasing to see him teaching a class of little ones."

"——, sixteen years of age, is an orphan. To give a full account of this boy would fill a volume. He has been a wanderer from the age of seven years, left to run his own course, and to seek his own living, which has been by begging, thieving, and collecting rags and bones. The first time he came to the Ragged School, which is upwards of four years ago, he was almost naked and starved; his looks, I think, would have drawn pity from the hardest heart. They drew my shirt off my back on to his. He could read a little, and for a long time manifested little or no concern about learning. In the course of time I got him placed in a situation at a tailor's shop. He had not been there many weeks before he got discharged for offering to strike his mistress. In the school he would at times become almost unmanageable, insomuch that I have often been advised to expel him altogether. This I would not do, but exercised my patience

by expelling him for a few weeks at a time, in all upwards of twenty-four times in the course of four years. He and another of the scholars were great companions in going about the streets and low beer-shops with their faces blackened, and were very expert in performing the '*nigger*.' He told me that sometimes they would pick up £2 per week, and would spend the money as fast as they got it, in playing skittles and other games of gambling. He has been in prison four times. I have often had him at my own house, and seriously talked and advised with him, urging him to change his course of life by going into a reformatory. The latter he was much averse to. For a long time I struggled with this boy amidst hope and fear, but ultimately I found that prayer and effort were not in vain. One night, about twelve months ago, he was sitting in the tailoring class, mending his old jacket. I sat down by his side, and again advised with him. 'Well,' said he with a sigh, 'I will take your advice, and will go to a reformatory if you can get me in.' I was still afraid of him, but testing him all I could, I made the effort, and through the influence of my respected Superintendent, John Finch, Esq., I got an admission for him. In a few days after I took him to London, and placed him in the reformatory called 'The Home in the East,' Old Ford, near Bow, where he has been eleven months. I have seen the Governor since, who told me that he was one of the best boys in the institution. To encourage the boy, he was allowed to come to Tunbridge Wells for a holiday, for two weeks, during which time I had him at my own house; and I can truly say that I was surprised and delighted at the great change that manifested itself. He told me that he should always consider me a father, and should it ever lay in his power he should show his love to the Ragged School by becoming a subscriber. He is now looking for next summer to come, when it is intended to draft him off to Canada."

Many more, did space permit, could be easily inserted. It must, however, suffice, respecting the boys, to add, in the missionary's words,—

"I have been much pleased and delighted in having many a visit from these once poor ragged boys, who have come to see their parents and friends after a long absence. One of these boys, who entered the navy about six years ago, came home, and brought £20 with him, part of which he gave to his parents, and before he left the town for sea again he gave a tea to some of his old Ragged Schoolfellows. During the year one of our emigrants has died at Algoa Bay. He was prosperous in business, and got to be master for himself in the butchering line, then married, and shortly after his marriage was called to render his account before God; and from the testimony I received from his sister-in-law, who was with him in his last moments, there was some reason to hope that the religious impressions he received in the Ragged School were manifest in his life and death. His dying testimony was, 'I die, wholly depending on Christ to save me.'"

Of the girls also details of interesting cases have been furnished by the Mistress. One or two we give:—

"A——, who was for some time a scholar in the school, and has been in respectable service two years in one place at Eastbourne, recently called upon me and expressed great thankfulness for the instruction she received while in the school, as it was the only means she had of obtaining that which is calculated to fit her for the service she now fills."

"B——, sixteen years of age, was a scholar in the school about four years, and during the greater part of that time was a most troublesome girl. Four months back

she left the school for service, and has continued in the same place to the present time; and it is most pleasing to hear with what gratitude she speaks of the good she received in the Ragged School. And as to appearance, she looks quite a different girl."

"I am," says the teacher, "pleased in often having many a respectable young woman call and see me who were once Ragged Scholars, some of whom are respectably married, and are doing well in the world."

The following particulars have been given by the missionary himself, and relate to the hopping movement of the present year:—

"This year now makes the seventh year of the harvest and hopping visitation. As usual, I have extended my operations to Yalding, East Peckham, Golden Green, and Lamberhurst, taking a wide circle round Tudely, Capel, Tunbridge, and Penshurst. During the last season I have travelled upwards of 1,000 miles, distributed 10,000 tracts, 400 'British Workman,' 500 'Band of Hope,' sold 25 Bibles and Testaments, also 74 Gospels in parts, all of which were at greatly reduced prices; 25 ditto given away. Held twelve meetings, three of which were in the open air, the rest in barns. Thus the seed of the word of God has been scattered broadcast, which cannot fail to bring forth fruit in due season.

"As a specimen of the manner in which these poor creatures live during the hopping season, the following is one:—In a barn at Capel, according to previous arrangements, I held a meeting on a Sunday afternoon. I arrived there about two o'clock, and found about forty, all Irish. They heartily welcomed me as an old friend. Fires were blazing in different parts of the farm-yard. Some were cooking, men gambling, women washing, some cutting hair, while others were performing the office of barber upon their companions. One sickening sight was to see a group of men, women, and children, at dinner. For their table they had nothing but the barn floor; straw served as a table-cloth, with no dish of any kind. They were all seated round a pile of cooked potatoes, cabbage, and bacon, all mixed up together. The youngsters now and then got a box of the ear for picking it up too fast with their fingers. This was going on the whole of the time I addressed them. I said, 'It is of no use my holding a meeting to-day.' 'Oh,' exclaimed several, 'now you are here, you aint going without preaching to us a little bit!' accordingly I addressed them, and they attended as well as was consistent with the continuance of their domestic affairs of washing and cooking. On leaving I received their usual salutations, and a hearty shake of the hand, together with an invitation to call and see some of them when I went to London. From there I went to Five Oak Green, and held an open-air service. About seventy assembled. A drunken man, clothed in rags and filth, mixed in with my audience. Now and then he tried to interrupt. By the drunken man's side stood a young man who had tried to interrupt on a previous Sunday. 'Jack,' I remarked, 'keep that man quiet.' He appeared proud of his office. He replied, 'Yes, Mr. Jay, I will,' taking the drunken man by the collar, and said, 'Now, old friend, I want you to hear this gentleman preach; and if you don't, do you see this?' holding up his big fist. 'Yes,' said the drunken man, 'all right, old friend.' He was quiet the whole of the time, and appeared partially sobered. From this place I went to Tudely Chequers, and held a meeting in a barn, which was kindly offered by the publican-farmer. On this occasion there were nearly 150. My pulpit was an old box, from which I commenced by singing, 'There is a fountain filled with blood,' &c., in which my congregation heartily joined. At this place I have held several meetings, and have been well received. This is a specimen of one Sunday's labour in the hop-picking season. I cannot fail to men-

tion Little Mill, which has been named in previous reports. Arriving at this place, I met with many of my old friends, Irish and gipsies, who heartily welcomed me by a grasp of the hand, especially one woman, who, some years ago, was brought under the influence of the Gospel by attending these meetings, and is now considered a converted character by Christian friends at Deptford, where she resides, at which place she at one time was looked upon as the most wicked woman in the whole town. She hastened and got a small tub, and turned it bottom upwards, for me to stand upon. To make sure that my pulpit was a safe one, I tried it, for fear the bottom might give way. My friend Mr W—— first mounted the tub and gave out a hymn, and took particular care to stand on its edges, lest he might have a downfall. During the whole of this service great attention was paid, and a spirit of earnestness manifested. Many told me that what they had heard fall from my lips on previous years had followed them wherever they went. From this place we went into Little Mill, and held another meeting, which was well attended. Several told me that they only got a tract once a year, and that was in the hopping season, when I came amongst them; and as to any other person visiting them for spiritual purposes, that was quite neglected. Tracts, Testaments, &c., were eagerly sought by them, and in no case have I had a refusal of a 'British Workman' by the Irish. Giving a 'British Workman' to a man and his wife who were sitting outside of a public-house, another Irishman snatched it out of the woman's hand and ran away. Her husband, a man nearly six feet high, soon caught him, and felled him to the ground, exclaiming, 'The gentleman gave it to my wife.' To stop a fight, I went and gave them some more, which quelled the rage of the two men. Horrid scenes sometimes are to be witnessed. At one place (Golden Green), one man had his finger bitten off; another, part of his ear. To grapple with this degraded class requires great grace and wisdom, also a tact suited to their own habits of life, which is one great means of gaining access amongst them.

"In concluding this Report I again thank God and take courage for the future, in the hope that I shall meet many in heaven who shall be trophies of the Saviour's command, of going into the highways and hedges, and preaching the Gospel to every creature."

Listening to the foregoing and many other particulars gave us much pleasure, and it is not doubted that any one who will give the time needful for the purpose, would feel equally interested in obtaining for themselves "facts and figures" by a personal visit to the school in Gas Lane, Tunbridge Wells.

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT OF DRURY LANE,

THE WORK-FIELD OF CHARLES STREET RAGGED SCHOOLS.

In all large towns and cities there are always some parts crowded by poverty and degradation. The fair city of Paris, that can boast justly of her fine streets and elegant buildings, has also a spot where filth and wretchedness abound. We need scarcely say that London is not an exception to the general rule. In the neighbourhoods of Stepney, Shadwell, Ratcliff Highway, Bethnal Green, and in others equally abandoned, thousands of demoralized human beings congregate and eke out their wretched existence. These localities constitute a field of labour for Ragged School operations, the City and

Home Missionary, the tract distributor, and Bible-women. But with all these invasive agencies the ranks of evil seem unrallied. The darkness that can be seen and the effects felt, appear as black as ever. This perhaps can be accounted for in some measure in the following manner:—As soon as any reformation has been created in the lives of these heathens—as soon as the seed of the Word takes root, and the hard heart becomes softened under the warm influence of Christian love, they immediately quit the spot that is so full of evil contamination, and remove to where they can live unmolested. The gap thus made is again filled up with some young beginner in crime, some amateur in vagabondism, and thus the efforts of Christians seem labour in vain. But in all these low districts Ragged Schools have been established and are working their quiet way, not only as reformative, but as preventive institutions. At least 28,000 children, mostly the offspring of immoral and Godless parents, are taught the blessings of an honest life, and are inculcated with sound Christian principles, and for whom many prayers are offered up for their temporal and eternal welfare.

There are, perhaps, few neighbourhoods so deeply sunk in vice and immorality as those of Drury Lane and St. Giles's. This once beautiful spot was the resort of the citizens of London, whither they flocked from the toils and cares of business, to inhale a purer atmosphere. Sir William Drury, in the reign of Elizabeth, built his family mansion on the spot now called Craven Buildings. It was afterwards inhabited by Lord Craven, who divided his time between amusing himself with his regiment, of which he was colonel, and attending to his garden.

It would be difficult to realize the feelings created in the mind of some ancient inhabitant of this street suddenly rising from the dead and beholding the magic change which, in the short space of two centuries, had come over the scene. Where merry birds once carolled gaily in the air, and rippling brooks sped quietly on their course, and where smiling fields of corn waved their sheaves in the yellow autumn sunshine, and innocent children gambolled in the summer hay-fields, nothing now meets the gaze of the astonished inhabitant but a smoky, murky atmosphere; streets with kennels filled with filth, and crowded with dirty, squalid children, without health or innocency; miserable hovels with windows patched with straw, homes where nought but discord and strife prevail; crime, from the baby pick-pocket to the ruffianly house-breaker; "men and women, in every variety of scanty and dirty apparel, lounging, scolding, drinking, smoking, squabbling, fighting, and swearing."

A popular modern writer, in recording his opinion of the condition of the immediate neighbourhood of Drury Lane and Holborn, says, "There is more of filth and squalid misery near those great thoroughfares than in any part of this mighty city."

"It would be difficult to find," says a leading article in a weekly journal a few months since, "even in this great metropolis, a locality where the inhabitants are in a more degraded state than in Charles Street, Drury Lane. One hundred people have been known to live in one house; and the uncleanliness and filth inseparable from such huddling together can be better imagined than described." Such is the immoral condition of the people in this street that policemen seldom venture in it singly. We have frequently been down

in the dens commonly called "the Kitchens" on a Sunday evening; and there, hiding its shameful head as in a corner, we have seen sin in all its hideous shapes and forms: bloated, besotted drunkards, burglars and house-breakers, with foreheads "villainously low." Of the latter class the police could point out in Charles Street alone at least a dozen, besides other minor criminals.

Among this scum of society, who have been mostly born and reared in dens such as we have described, there are to be found men and women who once moved in respectable society. We know of one man living in one of these cheap lodging-houses, who has taken his degree at Oxford, knows several languages, and might now have been, had he not become a victim to strong drink, a member of a respected class of society. The last we heard of him he had been summoned by his son, a shoe-black, for moneys received for pledging two or three suits of this poor lad's clothes.

A Ragged School has been carried on in this street for about fifteen years; and although the difficulties incident to the operation of a Christian work in so benighted a locality, and where counter efforts are being energetically put forth a few yards distant, in a Roman Catholic School, to doctrinize and instil with error the youth of the surrounding neighbourhood (playing at leap-frog and foot-ball, cursing and using obscene language among children and teachers, being the attraction on Sabbath evenings), although the difficulties encountered have been many, yet the primitive object in a great degree has been carried out. Poor children have been clothed and partly fed, destitute boys have been snatched from following a career of sin, and thieves have been nipped in the bud. The average attendance at the Day School, including boys and girls, is over 200, whilst the Week Evening Schools average 50 of elder children, many of whom are sweeping crossings or shoe-blacking during the day, but gladly avail themselves of the opportunity of improving themselves in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The right sort of material composes the Sunday Afternoon and Evening Schools; viz., genuine City Arabs and juvenile "roughs." These are being tamed down, and, by the grace of God, are becoming tractable and teachable.

The various auxiliary agencies connected with the school, such as Mothers' Meetings, Industrial Class for Girls, Band of Hope Meetings, Thursday Evening Lectures, &c., have been carried on under some considerable inconvenience for want of more room. An opportunity occurring, the Committee took upon themselves the responsibility of renting the whole of the premises, part of which has been hitherto used as a carpenter's shop and stables. The effluvia arising from the latter, on the ground floor, was not only offensive, but extremely unwholesome. Considerable alterations are necessary to make one of these rooms tenantable; the expense has been estimated at about £150, and it is expected, if funds can be accumulated, that this extra accommodation will be ready by the beginning of next year, when it is hoped some of the hundreds of those who are deserted or ill-treated by their natural protectors may be gathered in.

Two young children, one a girl about five, the other a boy about seven years old, both half clad, with dirty flesh, and that idiotic cast of countenance that bespoke the ill-treatment to which they were subjected, wandered into the school one rainy evening a few weeks since. The oft-repeated tale was soon told. They were asked, "Where is mother?" "In the

public-house." "Where is father?" "Locked up." The mother was drowning the last remnant of her womanhood in the gin-shop, and the father was in jail.

Walking along a by-street a few days since, we saw a thing like a wreck of a man, with scarcely enough rags on to hide his nakedness. He was limping along, followed by his two children, who were, if possible, in a more emaciated and ill-clad condition than he. The father suddenly slipped into a public-house, while his children crept under a doorway. Curious to know what led such an apparently starving man in such a place, we followed, and saw him, to our astonishment, call for a glass of gin, pay for it, and then emerge again into the street to beg a penny "to buy a crust of bread."

Such are the parents of many of our children. The cold world looks down scornfully upon these little outcasts, who by their squalid looks seem to say,—

"Oh, gather us poor weeds,
And change us into flowers!"

But God bless them: they are the children that we welcome in our Ragged Schools. A ragged coat, or no coat at all, is the only ticket of admission that is needed. Therefore, while it is yet day, while the harvest is still so great, let us not pause in our work of faith and labour of love; but, looking to the good Shepherd of the sheep, who wills not that *one* of these little ones should perish, let us "labour on at his command, and offer all our works to him."

CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS ON SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

200,000 CHILDREN IN LONDON NOT AT SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

Our readers will probably recollect that, in the early part of the present year, the Committee of the Ragged School Union called a Conference of ministers, gentlemen, and others interested in the welfare of the rising generation, for the purpose of considering what more could be done to meet the educational necessities of the very poorest portions of the population of London. Lord Shaftesbury presided on the occasion. A paper was read, in which it was stated that eleven Ragged School districts had been under a house-to-house visitation, and it was proved that out of 13,796 children therein resident, that 5,499 attended no school whatever. In those eleven districts there were 34 Ragged Schools, at which the *actual attendance* of scholars was,—

6,135 in Sunday Schools,
4,574 in Day Schools, and
1,809 in Evening Schools.

Of the 13,796 children in the eleven districts,—

6,135 at least were gathered into schools. To these add—
5,499 that never went, and we account for—

11,634 children out of the 13,796.

A very large proportion of the balance, if not the whole 2,162, would be on the books of the schools, and give partial attendance at them. Applying the

information thus obtained to the remainder of the districts in which Ragged Schools are in operation, it was clearly shown that while there are 26,690 children in the schools, there were at least 25,000 in these districts that, for various causes, never attend.

This subject was very carefully considered by the Conference held on March 25th, and the following resolutions were adopted:—

I. "That, viewing the missionary character of Ragged Schools, it appears to this Conference that they have a powerful claim upon the support of all Christians, and that it would therefore strongly press upon clergymen and other ministers the urgent need for their statedly bringing the subject before their respective congregations, and for their making regular collections towards the maintenance and extension of these valuable home missionary operations."

II. "That, considering the difficulty found in obtaining either funds or voluntary teachers to work existing Ragged Schools, this Conference think it desirable for the churches of wealthy or suburban districts to render direct aid to Ragged Schools in poorer localities, more especially by supporting and working some Ragged School as a branch effort of such church."

Since that period the Committee of the Sunday School Union have been looking at the same necessities, but on a broader basis, because they include within their sphere of labour classes far above that contemplated by Ragged Schools. A Conference was called by that Committee, of the metropolitan clergymen and ministers, and which met on November 17th, in the Union Hall, Old Bailey. At this Conference a paper was read, based on the information obtained in detail by the eight London auxiliaries of that Union. That paper brings out the same result as the one read at the Ragged School Conference of last March; namely, that there ought to be in the schools double the number that attend them. The number on the books of the London Sunday Schools is about 200,000, and it was clearly shown the number ought to be near 400,000. The Conference gave the whole day to the consideration of the subject. A variety of suggestions were thrown out, but the one that was most clearly defined, and received by far the most general sympathy and support, was that of *suburban churches making a selection of a needy or destitute district, and working it as its own home missionary station, supplying both funds and labour needful for the purpose.* The following resolution, at the close of the Conference in the afternoon, was unanimously adopted:—

Moved by the Rev. J. KENNEDY,—
Seconded by the Rev. Dr. WADDINGTON,—
"That this meeting of ministers of various Christian communities, assembled in conference with the Committee of the Sunday School Union, having given their most earnest consideration to the statements which have been laid before them on the subject of Sunday School extension in the metropolis, cannot separate without assuring the Committee and members of the Union of their heartiest sympathy with the great object which they contemplate, and of their readiness to co-operate with them in all wise and practical ways."

On the evening of the same day a general meeting of Sunday School teachers was convened. Extracts were read from the same paper that was

presented to the Conference, when the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

Moved by the Rev. HUGH ALLEN, D.D.,—
Seconded by Mr. J. G. GENT, of the Ragged School Union,—
"That while this meeting gratefully acknowledges the service rendered to the Church and the world by the Sunday School system as carried out in the metropolis, it deeply deplores the inadequate provision hitherto made for the religious instruction of the young, and the insufficient supply of teachers, shown by the Report upon Sunday School Extension presented this day."

Moved by the Rev. J. KENNEDY,—
Seconded by F. CUTHBERTSON, Esq., of the Sunday School Union,—
"That this meeting, recognising the paramount importance of early religious training, would urge upon the ministers of religion in the metropolis, and their congregations, the necessity of putting forth renewed efforts in this great work, becoming their interests and responsibilities; especially by increasing the number of teachers, and promoting their efficiency, and by opening Sunday Schools in destitute places."

The following is a copy of the paper read to the Conference:—

"The great good accomplished by the Sunday School imposes upon its friends and promoters two duties—extension and improvement.

"Having rendered eminent service to the Church of Christ and to society in general, this system has claims upon those whom it has served, which they cannot in justice or honour refuse to recognise and discharge.

"London, active in labour and care for the advancement of Sunday School interests, has not kept pace with the provinces in the extension, whatever it may have done in the improvement, of the system. Many of the manufacturing districts number 1 in 5, 6, or 7 of their population in Sunday Schools, while London has not above 1 in 14 or 15.

"As no valid reason can be found in the peculiarities of the social condition of its population, as the seat of government and the abode of the professional and wealthy classes, why this contrast should exist, much less why it should continue, the Sunday School Union deem it an imperative duty to invite your attendance here this day, that they may submit to the ministers of religion in the metropolis some of the figures and facts which they have collected upon its population in relation to Sunday Schools.

"These they present with much confidence as to their general accuracy; and although they cannot vouch for their exact correctness in every detail, they are certain that they furnish a safe and solid groundwork for practical purposes.

"Taking the juvenile population of London between five and fifteen years of age from the last census, and adding the increase since that date, there are now, in round figures, about 600,000.

"Including scholars under five and above fifteen years of age, the gross total upon the registers of the London Sunday Schools of all denominations may be taken at 200,000, being one in three of the juvenile population between five and fifteen years of age, and one in fifteen of the entire population.

"No deduction is made from this estimate for bad book-keeping, and for the infirmity too common among school-officers of keeping up large totals, nor for the fact that the average attendance of the scholars is little more than two-thirds of the numbers on the books.

"But this Union, concerned to place before you only a true view of the situation,

and knowing that some classes in the community do not send their young people to the Sunday School; also taking into account that in the last census foreigners in London are stated to be 40,000, gentlemen and gentlewomen 10,000, the professional classes 108,000, and allowing for Jews and other small sections of the people—they estimate all these at half a million, and granting them the usual proportion of children, deduct 100,000 from the juvenile population between five and fifteen, who should not be included in the number who are considered eligible for the Sunday Schools. And beyond these they reluctantly give another 100,000 to the same scale, to meet every possible doubt, and make their position invulnerable.

"There are, then, 200,000 on the books of the Sunday Schools, and 200,000 excluded on various grounds, leaving 200,000 unaccounted for, who are supposed to be suitable for the Sunday School, but are not found in its ranks; and thus the 600,000, the total juvenile population of London between five and fifteen years of age, are classified.

"These figures present a great fact; for if early religious instruction be an essential means of securing the greatest good of a people, and if parents do not, as a rule, supply this want, then there is a fearful destitution in the world's metropolis of the means of promoting the highest welfare of the population.

"Assuming that the Sunday School is one of the principal agencies employed by the Church for disciplining the young, then it is evident that one-half the young who might reasonably be expected to partake of its advantages are excluded therefrom.

"This fact, grave enough by itself, is aggravated as only the imagination can realize when viewed in connection with the existence of many powerful agencies and influences for the demoralization and ruin of the young.

"But great facts and general deductions, though they may prove sensational, will only become useful as they are analyzed and traced to their particular elements.

"Therefore your attention is now invited to the subject more in detail and by districts; and as this Union consists of eight Auxiliaries—known as the South West, East, and North, the Lambeth, Islington, South-west, and Greenwich—it will be convenient to take them in succession, giving a few particulars as to the condition of each.

"The South Auxiliary extends from Deptford in the east, to Battersea and Wandsworth in the west, and as far as Norwood in the south.

"This Auxiliary numbers about 30,000 scholars, but reports that in forty-six of its schools there is room for 4,000 more scholars, and that above half the schools want more teachers. Seventeen localities are mentioned where new schools are required.

"The Southwark Sunday School Society numbers thirteen schools and 5,241 scholars, which are found within the bounds of this Auxiliary, and were originated by the Rev. Rowland Hill, of happy memory.

"The Lambeth Auxiliary is nearly co-equal with the borough of the same name, and is in the heart of the south. There are 75 schools in this Auxiliary, and about 18,000 scholars. The present schools furnish room for 1,800 more scholars, 50 of them want more teachers, and 14 new schools are needed. The Secretary of this Auxiliary says the chief want of the various localities outside our Sunday Schools (sometimes very near them) is such as our present schools do not supply. A lower kind of school is wanted, something like a Ragged School, suitable for low neighbourhoods, amidst a class of children not fit for our respectable schools, whose habits of dirt and immorality render them objectionable associates for our comfortable and well-dressed scholars.

"The particulars supplied by the Greenwich Auxiliary give only the number of scholars, 9,600, and the information that there is a great want of teachers.

"Leaving the south, the West London Auxiliary next engages attention. Embracing a very large area west of Temple Bar and Gray's Inn Lane, but excluding the districts lying between the Thames and Hyde Park, also Belgravia, Chelsea, and Brompton, which form the South-west Auxiliary, this Auxiliary, which extends as far as the county of Middlesex in the west, and nearly as far as Camden Town and Hampstead in the North, has many excellent thriving schools, with room for 3,000 scholars more in the present schools, and several hundred teachers, while 17 new schools are wanted. Of the 110 schools in union in this Auxiliary,—

18 are in places of worship.
25 under „
1 over „
57 are in separate buildings.
7 in rooms.
1 in a railway arch.
1 in a stable.

This information is more useful than curious, for, taken as a sample of the school accommodation all over London, it shows how much room there is for the improvement of school buildings.

"After the west, in a north-easterly direction, comes the Islington Auxiliary, which has above half its young upon the roll of the Sunday School, being the largest proportion by far of any locality in the metropolis. Five of its schools sustain branch schools, one of them being found in Spitalfields, and two of its schools are ready to undertake branch schools. Yet Islington has room for 1,500 more scholars in its present schools, and though mostly well supplied with teachers, could employ 100 more, and knows three localities at least where schools are wanted.

"After Islington comes the North London Auxiliary, bounded on the south by the Thames, on the west by Temple Bar and Gray's Inn Road, on the east by Bishopsgate and Kingsland, and on the north by Ball's Pond Road, omitting its branches. This Auxiliary is distinguished by its ability to accommodate 5,500 additional scholars and 550 teachers in its present schools. In this densely populated part of London there are many places in great want of Sunday Schools; as Golden Lane, Leather Lane, Wenlock Road (City Road), Harvey Street, and Vinegar Ground (Old Street Road). Among these, the district of Whitecross Street stands out unrivalled in all the worst features of ignorance and vice by any place in Christian, if not in heathen lands.

"Last, but not least, the East London Auxiliary claims attention. With an area equal to that of the Tower Hamlets, and a population consisting largely of the labouring classes, who work in the great docks, ship-yards, and factories of various kinds which abound in this region, no part of the metropolis is more indebted to the Sunday School, and none presents a stronger claim to a continuance of its benefits. It is gratifying to know that in this Auxiliary, during the last ten years, Sunday Schools have increased 30 per cent., teachers 50, and scholars 70 per cent. on the numbers previously reported. Yet the schools are not full by six or seven thousand, and 600 teachers are wanted. In this division, Whitechapel, St. George's East, Shadwell, Bromley, and Isle of Dogs, are very destitute of Sunday Schools.

"Not to weary you with details, let it be further observed that, while the large divisions of London will give, in the aggregate, 1 scholar to 3 of the juvenile population, and 1 to 2 of those who may be fairly claimed for the Sunday School, there are in most of these divisions here and there blocks of houses containing children by the thousand, for whom no Sunday School is provided, and these are unfortunately the poorest and most neglected districts in the metropolis. Such are Walworth Common in the south, Whitecross Street in the north, and St. George's in the east.

"In corroboration of these statements, a few extracts (which might be multiplied at discretion) from the Reports of Union Secretaries are submitted:—

"'1,000 children in this locality not attending any school.'

"'The number of children in this locality who do not attend Sabbath Schools is very great.'

"'Streets swarm with children not attending any Sabbath School.'

"'Thousands of children in this locality not attending Sunday Schools.'

"Another class of extracts refers to the lack of teachers:—

"'School falling off for want of teachers.'

"'More teachers required, earnest and prayerful.'

"'This school suffers much for want of teachers. Splendid school-room, adapted for a large school.'

"One Secretary, in a district of 25 schools, says, 'Every Superintendent, without exception, bitterly complains of want of teachers, and in this district there are 275 public-houses and beer-shops.'

"Another Secretary says, 'More and improved accommodation required in this district. Great want of teachers.'

"Another, 'The great want seems to be teachers, and therefore the great difficulty of opening new schools.'

"Another Secretary says, 'The agency at work is found inadequate to meet the present requirements. From almost every school of the 79 there are well-grounded complaints that the supply of teachers is lamentably short; and it is universally felt, that if means were devised to obtain the additional agency required, the number of children would be increased in a relative degree.'

"Equally conclusive evidence might be supplied from the same reliable sources, showing the great want of money support in the maintenance of many schools, and the cheerless prospect of money help being afforded for the erection of new schools.

"The figures and facts now presented prove conclusively,—

"*That in London there is great destitution of Sunday School instruction.*

"*That in London there is great deficiency of Sunday School teachers.*

"*And that in London there is great need of additional money support to existing schools, and of money help for the erection of new schools.*

"Here the question naturally arises, How can these evils be remedied, and these wants be provided for? and who are the parties who are responsible for this state of things, and who are bound to provide the remedies? This Union cannot be content with the mere publication of these painful facts. As an organization, it has laboured for sixty years to promote the objects for which it was formed; and now, by mutual counsel and co-operation with the ministers and pastors of the churches, seeks to provide for the spiritual wants of tens of thousands of young ones who are still neglected. This work, without doubt, devolves upon the Church of Christ, and is enforced by direct precept as much as it is by the genius of the Gospel; and only as the religious community realize the great importance of this work, and their sacred duty to perform it, will there be reason to expect any great improvement. Must not the tone of feeling in the churches generally, in relation to Christian work, be defective and unhealthy, when it is found that in the Sunday Schools of London there are but few that could not employ more teachers, or that would not rejoice in exchanging some of their teachers for others of riper age and better qualifications for the work? If it were possible to make Christian work a condition of Christian fellowship, and if all who profess to love the Saviour, who are suitable for the service, were required to show their love to him by feeding his lambs, then it would be impossible that the young of this great city should go uncared for in such vast multitudes. What is to be done? 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the

labourers are few;' and prayer ascends to the great Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest; and many look to His Church for an answer to this prayer.

"To whom shall this Union look for help, if not to the spiritual guides of the people? And if they inquire, How may localities in great need of Sunday Schools be supplied? this Union suggests that the nearest Christian community be invited to do the work; and let it not be deterred from making the attempt by the greatness of the task, or its own inadequacy for the effort; but persuade one, two, or more of its most active and devoted members to open a cottage or mission school, and gather the children to hear about Jesus. Where this cannot be done, let the nearest Sunday School be urged to send one or more of its best teachers, in a missionary spirit, to open and conduct a branch school.

"There are a few instances in which these suggestions have been anticipated and acted upon with great success, as in the case of the Islington district, in which a Christian church sends a number of its devoted members between two and three miles to conduct a large and useful school in a very necessitous locality.

"And there are a few schools like the following:—

"'This school is in a very happy and flourishing state, and can furnish teachers for other schools. About twenty of their teachers and senior scholars assist other schools.'

"In such cases this Union will give all the help it can, in grants of books and school requisites, and will use its influence with the Bible Society to obtain their assistance also. But how is the universal want of more teachers, and of teachers better qualified, to be met? Many Sunday Schools are weak and inefficient because they cannot obtain a supply of agents to carry on the work; and if the 200,000 children not at present in school are to be brought under instruction, 20,000 additional teachers will be required. In promoting Sunday School extension, teachers are first in demand; and the first step in extension should be in using the accommodation offered by the present schools for more scholars, and this can be accomplished only by the introduction of more teachers to the work. But whence are they to come? Can ministers answer? Can churches answer? The material of which teachers are formed is found in abundance in the Christian Church and in the Sunday School. How then may it be moulded into proper form, and become instinct with love and zeal for the Sunday School? Chiefly in two ways:—

"1st. By the diligent and wise training of senior scholars for the teacher's work in the introductory class, according to the "Plea and Plan" for that class by Mr. W. H. Groser, and published by this Union, which sets so high a value upon its useful and practical character, that they present a copy of it to each minister here this day, with an earnest request that it may be perused, and, if approved, that such a class be established in his own school.

"2nd. By ministers and church officers enforcing the great and sacred principle of service in Christ's kingdom upon all who seek admission therein. "No man liveth to himself;" "Ye are not your own;" "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant;" are among the maxims that need to be worked into the tissues of Christian life. If this were systematically practised by the Church, who can doubt her power to pour into the Sunday School a stream of spiritual life that should both improve and extend the system?

"The preparation of teachers for their work, the improvement of school buildings and the addition of class-rooms, a more liberal support of existing schools, a vigorous and general effort to increase the number of schools, and a more cordial union between the school and the Church, are subjects that have a close connection with Sunday School extension, but they are too numerous to receive a full and fair consideration

now. This Union must for the present be content with having called your attention to great facts, and their bearing upon the best interests of a mighty population, with the suggestion of a few simple practical remedies for admitted evils. Gladly would it invite you to a grateful acknowledgment of the grace and love of God, in the establishment and growth of the Sunday School, and in the manifold fruits which it has yielded the Church and the world. Humbly would it plead that your sympathies and support should be given to a cause to which many of you are deeply indebted, and which will more than repay you for every outlay in its favour. Fervently will it pray that in the minds of pastors and people a profound conviction may grow, that the basis of all Sunday School extension and improvement must be found in a thorough appreciation of the magnitude and importance of this work, and in an earnest, faithful resolve to enter upon it in the spirit of Him who said, "Suffer the little children come unto me."

The Children's Gallery.

THE OLD-FASHIONED LADIES;

OR,

POOR, YET MAKING MANY RICH.

It was quite an annoyance to a fashionable family in our church that two old ladies, who adhered to a very ancient mode of dress, occupied the pew before them every Sunday. They wore narrow black silk dresses, wide collars, and old-fashioned bonnets. The children had drawn several caricatures of their neighbours in their hymn-books. These thoughtless young people did not notice the sweet peace which illuminated the faces of the two old ladies while they "worshipped the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

When we went out on a collecting tour for the missionary society, we presented the book very gladly to the rich lady who dressed so beautifully. She received us in an elegant drawing-room, but a cloud shadowed her face on learning our errand. After making many excuses about her want of faith in such far-off missions, and her preference for home charities, and the times which limited her expenditure, she returned with half a crown.

At an unpretending little house we stopped rather unwillingly. Here lived those shabby old ladies who looked so antiquated: it was almost useless to solicit their aid. The room was plainly furnished with well-worn furniture and a home-made carpet: there were no pictures on the walls, no books visible, except an old family Bible, which looked as if it were always open. At the sight of our little subscription-book it was unnecessary to mention our object. The younger sister went to some distant bureau drawer, and brought back an old leather purse. It was full of bright gold pieces. With a radiant face she gave three shining sovereigns into our hands, saved by self-denial and numberless economies, by sales of fruit and eggs, by constant remembrance of the injunction, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." We had been disposed sometimes to laugh at the two old ladies, but never again did we think of them without reverence and love.

When we were preparing to send a present to the hospital, a chaise stopped at the door, and the two old ladies appeared, bearing a goodly store. The old

chaise was filled with cups of jelly and bottles of currant wine, with soft linen and warm blankets. They had brought enough to fill a generous box. It was easy to see why the dear old people wore the same dresses year after year, and carried such faded parasols.

We heard of a very poor family, and went to ascertain what they especially needed: we had been anticipated by the same charitable hands. There was the willow basket, familiar in all the houses o our poor, which had brought bread and meat, and cordials for the sick. With our two old ladies it seemed very true that "giving does not impoverish:" their cruse of oil was never empty.

Again we called at the old house, to beg something for soldiers' tracts and books: still one gold coin remained to send us on our way rejoicing. They were quilting in the clean old kitchen; this must be designed for themselves: but they asked us to walk into the parlour, and see a few articles they were about to send to a home missionary's family. For many months they had been sewing and knitting, until a table was covered with the garments for the unknown brother in Christ.

That was a sacred house: it reminded us of the one to which Jesus used to resort. We never failed to find gold in the worn purse, food in the closet for the hungry, wine and soup for the sick, whenever we applied to the women who were "poor, yet making many rich."

When jewels and costly dress will have lost their charm, when the white robe of Christ's giving will be the only one desired, our two old-fashioned ladies will find their gold and silver, hoarded for his sake, safe for them, and all their charities, given so noiselessly that the left hand did not know what the right hand did, repaid a thousand-fold.

Notice of Meeting.

DOVE ROW RAGGED SCHOOL, GOLDSMITH ROW, HACKNEY ROAD.

THE friends of these schools may be interested to know the result of an examination of the Day Schools, held Thursday, November 12th, 1863.

There were present about 200 children over five years of age, under the care of a master and mistress. A gentleman in the neighbourhood who takes a deep interest in these schools writes as follows:

"Having been present at the examination, I take the opportunity of stating to the friends that it afforded me great satisfaction. I think the intelligence manifested, as well as the acquirements obtained in the simple rudiments of educational training, may well encourage the Committee to maintain the school in its efficiency.

"It was also a marked and gratifying feature to find the children able to give feeling and suitable answers to questions touching the coming of our Lord, and the way of life and salvation through him. The girls showed to the most advantage; and from what I hear this is not unusual, partly because they are naturally more apt and ready with the tongue, and partly owing to the earlier age at which the boys are taken away to work."

Another friend who was present, and who has much knowledge of the Ragged School work, said that the boys were more subdued in their behaviour than is usual in such a class of children. This is traceable to the kind and firm manner of the teacher, combined with the weight of his moral and religious character.

The singing in both schools was highly satisfactory.

THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION MAGAZINE.

Spirit of Mercy, oh, be thou our Guide!
Lead us to where we may in God's dear name
Do something for His sake who for us died:
To do it rightly still his help we claim.
The simplest comforts of a prosperous home—
Food, raiment, money unmissed from its store—
Would oft, like sunshine, to the cottage come:
A ray of light, where all was dark before.
Oh, everywhere in this dear generous land
Are fountains of deep mercy flowing still:
The tiniest drop there added by our hand
Swells the glad stream that succours human ill:
Food for the hungry, shelter for the head,
Where else the night wind pitiless would beat;
Relief from suffering, and the quiet bed
Where souls of death-struck men their pard'ning God may meet;
And nurseries, where trainèd plants may grow
Into fair trees, their fatherland to bless;
And infant streams be cleansèd, ere they flow
With poison-water's waste of wretchedness.
Oh, tarry not! The infant of to-day,
Whose blue eyes smile through curls of sunny hair,
A few short years on that soft plastic clay
The stamp of evil may have hardened there.

VOLUME XV.

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ALL BOOKSELLERS.

TO OUR READERS.

Tempus fugit is a sentiment that perhaps more deeply penetrates the mind of an editor than any other person, especially if his editorial duties have to be closely dove-tailed with many others of equal importance. The filling of the corresponding page to this of the last volume seems so very recent as almost to throw a doubt on the mind whether twelve months have really elapsed since writing it. That they have sped their way, and now form a part of the vast past, is but too true. The great question is, Have we done what we could for our own improvement, for the good of others, and for the glory of God, as opportunity was given? or, by neglecting those opportunities, have we proved selfish, looked on what we have—time, talent, wealth—as our own, and not considering that these we hold as stewards, and that an account will be required of our stewardship in the great final day of reckoning? Our time, like our opportunities, is fleeting, and our course may end sooner and more unexpectedly than we contemplate. The year drawing to a close has been one in which the Ragged School Union has lost by death an unusual number of friends and supporters, and without apparently having had others to come forward to fill the vacancies so caused. This loss was one the Society was scarcely prepared for, from the fact that at the time of going to press with the finishing sheet of last year's volume it was shown that the Committee of the Ragged School Union had in the last half-year of 1862 voted £1,644 13s. 5d. more than in that period they had received from the public, and since that time it is estimated that they have voted aid and made promise of assistance to the extent of £1,000 more than they have in 1863 received from their supporters; thus showing that their resources for effectively carrying on their movement are in eighteen months lessened by nearly £3,000. It is sincerely hoped the friends of the Society will take this into their serious consideration, and give the Committee the aid they so much need.

The year closing, so far as schools in general are concerned, and Ragged Schools in particular, has been one for consolidation rather than extension, for increasing their efficiency rather than multiplying their efforts. It has been pre-eminently one in which a review has been taken of the work in hand, and of that needful to be done, but not yet touched. Many districts in London have been specially visited, and facts gathered of exact position, educationally considered. These facts in detail are both lengthy and numerous, and before they could be laid before those who were invited to consider them, had to be condensed and laid before them in *multum in parvo* form. This was done at a Conference of the friends of the poor, convened by the Committee of the Ragged School Union, and presided over by Lord Shaftesbury in March last. It was then clearly shown, that while there were 26,000 children in attendance at the Ragged Schools of London, there were 25,000 more of the same class, and living in the same localities, from various reasons attending no school whatever, excepting that of the street, with vice for the teacher.

The Committee of the Sunday School Union have also looked at the same question, and also called a Conference to consider it. The Conference they called was composed of the clergymen and ministers of London, and the startling fact they laid before the Conference was, that while there were on the books of the metropolitan Sunday Schools, 200,000 names of children belonging to these schools, yet there were 200,000 more that ought to be in those schools and never attended them. The great fact brought out by both these central societies is, that only half the number of children are at school that ought to be. The idea thrown out at both the Conferences, and pressed on all present for further consideration, was that suburban churches, possessing, as many of them do, a surplus of money power and teaching talent, should map out for themselves a destitute locality, and work it as their own home mission station. Efforts of such character would give a healthy vigour to such a church, and be the means of saving many souls from death. Should any church be inclined to adopt the suggestion, the officers of the Ragged School Union will have great pleasure in rendering any aid in their power in mapping out a district, and otherwise assisting in so good a cause.

THE EDITOR.

1, EXETER HALL,
December, 1863.

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